

Cancer facility cuts time in half

Case study

The Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre is the UK's most advanced cancer care facility with state-of-the-art equipment for clinical care.

However, until recently, secretarial staff at the centre were still using outdated analogue technology and old-fashioned analogue tapes for audio typing. Poor audio quality and having to fast forward and rewind tapes to find pieces of urgent dictation also took its toll on efficiency.

Now the centre has invested in the latest digital dictation equipment – and is already reaping the benefits for its patients and staff.

The success at the Beatson has also won suppliers Voice Technologies an NHS National Framework contract for digital dictation and speech recognition.

Eleanor McColl, IT client manager at the Beatson, said: "Using Voice Technologies' digital dictation solution has reduced the time taken by consultants and registrars correcting and chasing urgent work, and secretaries can now find priority work more quickly. With 91 authors and 48 secretaries using the new system, the turnaround time from dictation to typing has dramatically improved – by at least 50 per cent – and urgent letters are typed within one day."

She added: "The old system saw secretaries spending an average of five hours a month searching for urgent dictation on analogue tapes.

Now our authors use a built-in bar code scanner to read the patient's hospital number and can tag dictation as urgent.



Above: Dr Martin Russell quickly gets to grips with the new dictation equipment

"Clinicians can listen to a piece of dictation at their desk and they can even see the progress of a piece of dictation during the transcription process."

The new system has also improved workflow efficiency, allowing the system manager to monitor progress and review secretaries' workload, and team leaders are able to allocate typing to specific typists to spread the workload evenly.

Dr Martin Russell, consultant in clinical oncology, said that most of his colleagues adapted to the new equipment very rapidly, and can see the benefits. Both doctors and secretaries are very happy with the new system. In fact, as the secretaries are more up to date, they are keen to keep it that way – it has acted as a positive incentive.

Clinicians can now see the progress of a piece of dictation

Eleanor McColl, the Beatson

Top centre in Europe

Costing £105 million, and based in Glasgow, the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Care Centre rivals Europe's top cancer hospitals in terms of facilities and equipment, and has some of the most skilled healthcare professionals in the country.

The centre is the second largest in the UK: it sees more than 8,000 new patients and administers in excess of 20,000 courses of chemotherapy and about 6,500 courses of radiotherapy each year.

Its facilities include 11 linear accelerators, three CT-simulators, an MR scanner, PET-CT scanner and cyclotron, as well as other modern radiotherapy and diagnostic imaging equipment.

The Beatson is named after Sir George Beatson, a pioneer in the treatment of breast cancer.

